

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 KUWAIT 01103 080938 Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 071420 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6351

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T KUWAIT 1103

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MASS KU IZ

SUBJECT: KUWAITI REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE WITH AIR COVER

REF: KUWAIT 1099

1. I CALLED ON MINDEF SHAIKH SAAD APRIL 7 TO GET HIS ANGLE ON KUWAIT' S NEED FOR AIR COVER. I TALKED ALONG LINES OF PARAS FIVE AND SIX BELOW. INTERESTINGLY, SAAD SAID HE PREFERRED I PURSUE MATTER WITH FONMINISTRY. (SINCE SIZE, NATURE AND TIMING OF ANY FOREIGN AIR CORE IS SO NEAVILY DEPENDENT ON PROGRESS OF GOK TALKS WITH IRAFZS AT FONMIN LEVEL, I DO NOT BLAME HIM FOR THIS ANSWER.) SAAD ALSO INDICATED CLEARLY SUBJECT WAS OF PERSONAL INTEREST TO PRME MINISTER JABER.

2. SAAD SAID IRAQI TROOPS HAVE NX NO MEURS WITHDRAWN FROM KUWAIT SOIL. AS GESTURE TO PAVE WAY FOR ARRIVAL IF IRAQI DELEGATION FOR TALKS APRIL 6, THEY WITHDREW FROM SECTOR SOUTHWEST OF SAMETA. HOWEVER, SMALL IRAQI FORCE REMAINS ASTRIDE MAIN SUPPLY ROUTE TO SAMETA FROM KUWAIT' S POST BELOW UMM QASR, AND CINCENTRATION OF PERHAPS 2000 TROOPS REMAINS STATIONED ALONG GULF INSIDE KUWAITI FRONTIER.

3. WITH FONMIN SABAH SOLIDLY OCCUPIED WITH HIS IRAQI COUNTER-PART TODAY, I SAW UNDERSEC RASHID AGAIN TO ASK HIM PRESENT STATE OF PLAY. RASHID SAID HE HAD JUST ATTENDED FOUR HOUR
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PAGE 02 KUWAIT 01103 080938 Z

MEETING WITH IRAQIS. IT SEEMED, HE SAID, IRAQIS BROUGHT LITTLE WITH THEM BUT ENGAGING SMILES. SITUATION THEREFORE REMAINED UNCHANGED SO FAR, WITH IRAQIS MILITARILY IN POSSESSION OF PEICE OF KUWAIT TERRITORY THEY WANT IN ORDER BETTER GUARD SOUTHERN APPROACHES TO THEIR PORT AND BASE OF UMM QASR, AND KUWAITIS DEMANDING THAT NEGOTIATIONS START WITH AGREEMENTS OF 1932 AND 1963.

4. RASHID SAID IT PERFECTLY CLEAR IRQIS ALSO WANTED ISLANDS OR WARBA AND BUBIYAN. KUWAITIS HAVE COUNTERED THAT THIS WOULD MEAN LOSS OF ONE THIRD OF KUWAITI TERRITORY WHICH " UNIMAGINABLE." RASHID ADDED GENESIS OF KUWAITIS' S BELIEF THAT THEY NEEDED AIR COVER WAS ASSESSMENT THAT ONLY WAY TO DEFEND TWO ISLANDS WAS BY AIR, SINCE THEY OUR OF RANGE OF KUWAITI ARTILLERY.

5. EMPHASIZING I WAS SPEAKING PERSONALLY, I SAID I WOULD ADVISE GOK SORT OUT ITS THINKING AND TAILOR ITS MILITARY MOVES VERY CAREFULLY TO ITS ASSESSMENT OF IRAQI INTENTIONS. WAS IRAQI DELEGATION IN TWON TO MAKE A DEAL BASED ON LIMITED OBJECTIVE OF ACQUIREING SMALL STRIP OF DESERT TO BETTER GURARD UMM QASR PORT? OR WERE IRAQIS PLAYING FOR TIME? WERE THEY TALKING HERE WHILE PREPARING " PEARL HARBOR" TYPE ADVENTURE? ANSER GOK CAME UP WITH WOULD DETERMINE WHETHER KUWAIT REALLY NEEDED FOREIGN HELP QUICKLY OR HAD TIME TO EXPAND ITS OWN AIR AND GROUND FORCES UNDER CAREFULLY PLANNED PROGRAMS.

6. I SAID IF SPEED WAS OF THE ESSENCE, SEEMED TO ME IDEA OF BUYING PLANES AND HIRING FOREIGN PILOTS POSED NUMBER OF PROBLEMS. KUWAIT MIGHT RPT MIGHT BE ABLE ACQUIRE ASSORTMENT OF AIRCRAFT FROM SOMEWHERE AND HIRE MERCENARY PILOTS, BUT THIS STRUCK ME AS WASTE OF MONEY AND VERY DISRUPTIVE TO OVERALL MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS OF KUWAIT. MY ADVICE WAS TO THINK IN TERMS OF CONTINGENCY PLANNING WHERBY FREIENDLY COUNTRIES WITH AIR CAPABILITY WOULD BE ASKED IF THEY WILLING COME TO KUWAIT' S ASSISTANCE IF IRAQIS PUSHED BUTTON. I SAID IF GOK CHOSE LATTER COURSE, COUNTRIES INVOLVED SHOULD BE APPROACHED AS MUCH IN ADVANCE AS POSSIBLE, SINCE GREAT DEAL OF PLANNING AND PREPARATIONS WOULD BE NECESSARY. I SAID I COULD NOT OF COURSE COMMIT USG BUT I BELIEVED US WOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO EFFORTS OF JORDAN, SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN TO HELP KUWAIT MEET MAJOR THREAT TO ITS SECURITY.

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PAGE 03 KUWAIT 01103 080938 Z

7. RASHID THANKED ME AND SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS MATTER WITH

FONMIN AND PM.

8. COMMENT: OUTCOME OF PRESENT KUWAIT- IRAQI TALKS
OBVIOUSLY REMAIN VERY UNCERTAIN AT THIS POINT, BUT I HOPE WE
NOW AT LEAST HAVE ENCOURAGED PM, FONMINISTRY AND MINDEFENSE
TO THINK MORE CLEARLY ABOUT THAT THEY MEAN BY NEED FOR AIR COVER.
I THINK THERE IS SOME HOPE THEY MAY BUY THE CONTINGENCY
APPROACH.
STOLTZFUS

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973KUWAIT01103
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: KUWAIT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730436/aaaahvis.tel
Line Count: 128
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 73 KUWAIT 1099
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20-Dec-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <09-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971205
Subject: KUWAITI REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE WITH AIR COVER
TAGS: MASS, IZ, KU
To: AMMAN
JIDDA
SECSTATE WASHDC
SS
TEHRAN
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

